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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-fourth session
Agenda item 4

REVIEW OF FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN FIELDS WITH WHICH
THE SUB-COMMISSION HAS BEEN CONCERNED

Draft resolution submitted by Mr. Al-Khasawneh, Mrs. Attah, Mr. Bossuyt
Mr. Boutkevitch, Ms. Chavez, Mr. Despouy, Mr. Eide, Mrs. Forero Ucros,
Mr. Guissé, Mr. Hatano, Mr. Heller, Mr. Joinet, Mr. Khalifa, Mr. Maxim
Mr. Merrills, Mr. Ramadhane, Mrs. Warzazi and Mr. Yimer

1992/... Support for the recommendations of the
Pan-African Conference on Democracy and
Management of the Transition in Africa

The Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities,

Having taken note of the deliberations of the Pan-African Conference on Democracy and Management of the Transition in Africa, held in Dakar from 25 to 28 May 1992 and attended by more than 200 political leaders from 42 African countries and by prominent figures from all parts of the world,

Noting the innovative and particularly productive character of that meeting, which, for the first time, enabled leaders of political parties in power and of opposition movements to call a truce in their ruthless struggle to gain or retain power and to reflect together on the future of Africa,

Observing that the discussions focused on the following three basic themes: (a) What kind of democracy and what kind of transition for Africa?; (b) The imperative need for development as a basis for democracy; and (c) The instruments for the promotion of democracy and management of the transition,

1. Takes note with interest of the observations and conclusions contained in the final resolution of the Dakar Conference;

2. Notes in particular the undertaking by participants to respect the fundamental principles of democracy, namely (a) freedom of expression, association and initiative; (b) separation of powers; (c) political pluralism, trade-union pluralism and media pluralism; (d) respect for human rights; (e) free and democratic elections; and (f) democratic alternation in power, principles described as the basis for a successful transition;

3. Also notes that, in order to ensure the normal functioning of institutions, the Dakar Conference recommended:

(a) A statute for opposition movements as an essential cog in the machinery of democracy, with official recognition of their right to alternation in power, entailing the unrestricted exercise of public freedoms, the right to participate in all elections, the right to free and democratic elections, the right to monitor all phases of the electoral process and the right of access to the media, without discrimination;

(b) A statute for former heads of State who agree to abide by the rules of the democratic process, to submit to the will of the people and leave office on the basis of the results of elections or of a personal decision;

(c) A national charter embodying the solemn undertaking of all political actors to opt for peaceful transition in observance of the rules of the democratic process, the sovereignty of the people and pluralism;

(d) A definition of the role and status of the Army so that, like all other institutions of the State, it confines itself to its traditional tasks of defending territorial integrity and carrying out specific development missions or providing assistance to endangered democracies, in the framework of regional mechanisms, the organization of which remains to be determined;

(e) Elections as the only means of access to power, for a smooth changeover from a single-party regime to a democratic regime, and supervision of the electoral process by a joint monitoring body, comprising representatives of both the authorities and the political parties concerned;

4. Strongly supports the views of the Dakar Conference stressing the close interdependence of development and democracy, while reaffirming that development is not a prerequisite for building a democratic society or culture;

5. Notes that the participants undertook to reflect on the ways of ensuring a continuing national dialogue among economic actors to permit broad reflection and consensus in the formulation of economic policy, and that they emphasized the importance of individual initiative and ways of preserving and developing the economic and industrial fabric of Africa;

6. Welcomes with satisfaction the Dakar Conference's recognition of the importance of regional economic integration, which, in conjunction with genuine political cooperation, can pave the way for the establishment of far-reaching African undertakings;

7. Notes that the Dakar Conference recommended the establishment of structures to remedy any dysfunctions in African democracies, namely:

(a) The establishment of a Pan-African transition monitoring mechanism;

(b) The Establishment of an African mediation committee to settle political disputes and armed conflicts, under the aegis of the leaders of African political parties and able to intercede at the express request of all the parties to a conflict;

(c) The institutionalization of a general conference of African political parties;

8. Congratulates the organizers of the Dakar Conference on their successful initiative and suggests that they disseminate the findings as widely as possible, including to the competent international authorities;

9. Encourages the participants to put the result of their fruitful deliberations into practice and to follow it up by calling on all political actors in Africa to contribute actively to that process in the future.